

Appl. No. 10/050,511
Amdt. dated September 3, 2004
Reply to Office Action of June 3, 2004

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

This amendment is filed in response to the Office Action mailed June 3, 2004. At that time, claims 1-13, 15-24, and 26-35 were pending in this application. In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-9, 11, 12, 15-20, 22, 23, 26, 29, 31, and 32 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,022,044 issued to Cherry (hereinafter "Cherry"). The Examiner also rejected claims 1-4, 6-9, 11-12, 15, 17-20, 22-23, 26, 28, 29, 31, 32, 34, and 35 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,199,898 issued to Matsuda, et al. (hereinafter "Matsuda"). In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 10, 13, 21, 24, 30, and 33 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Cherry in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,565,118 to Bakhsh, et al. (hereinafter "Bakhsh").

By this paper, claims 1, 15, and 26 have been amended. Additionally, the specification has been amended. In view of these amendments and the following remarks, allowance of claims 1-13, 15-24, and 26-35 is respectfully requested.

INTERVIEW SUMMARY

The Applicants thank the Examiner for the personal interview with the Applicant's representative on June 23, 2004. During the interview, the rejections of all pending claims were discussed in consideration of the cited prior art references of Cherry, Matsuda, and Bakhsh. Applicant's representative presented proposed amendments to claims 1, 15, and 26 that are set forth above. The arguments presented related to the addition of the limitation "wherein the first stiffening element is a stay" to independent claims 1, 15, and 26. It was agreed that the amended claims 1, 15, and 26, as set forth above, appear to overcome the cited art.

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

The specification has been amended to correct minor editorial problems.

REJECTION OF CLAIMS

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-9, 11, 12, 15-20, 22, 23, 26, 29, 31, and 32 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,022,044 issued to Cherry (hereinafter "Cherry"). The Examiner also rejected claims 1-4, 6-9, 11-12, 15, 17-20, 22-23, 26, 28, 29, 31, 32, 34, and 35 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,199,898 issued to Matsuda, et al. (hereinafter "Matsuda"). In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 10, 13, 21, 24, 30, and 33 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Cherry in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,565,118 to Bakhsh, et al. (hereinafter "Bakhsh").

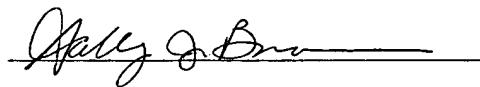
In view of the agreement reached during the personal interview with the Examiner on June 23, 2004, amend claims 1, 15, and 26 are allowable over these rejections of record. Support for these amendments may be found in claims 10, 21, and 30. Since claims 2-13, 16-24, and 27-35 depend from allowable claims 1, 13, and 25, claims 2-13, 16-24, and 27-35 are also allowable. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of these rejections and claims 1-13, 15-24, and 26-35 be allowed.

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CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, the Applicants submit that claims 1-13, 15-24, and 26-35 are in a condition for immediate allowance. Applicant respectfully requests that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case. If there are any remaining issues preventing allowance of the pending claims that may be clarified by telephone, the Examiner is requested to call the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,



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